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Subject: The Aims and Methods of Christian Life.

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OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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AIMS AND METHODS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

“Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.”—Acts III. 19, 20.

It is impossible for us to stand connected with religious truth just as they did to whom the Gospel was first made known. We are not of the Jews. We have no system to escape from such as controlled them. We have no such doubts respecting Jesus Christ as they had. We cannot, as they did, receive the Gospel as “tidings” or “news” in any sense. It is not only not novel, but it is one of the most familiar things possible, to our minds. The very things which in that early day held their minds in suspense, and led to discussion, are things which are as familiar to us as the alphabet. Nor can we possibly be called to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way as they were. For, it does not mean now what it meant then, to say that we believe he was the Son of God. It involved at that time such a breadth of commitment; it implied such a recession from current beliefs and courses, as cannot possibly occur again.

And yet, men are continually called to come to Christ. One of the most common expressions, and one which is perhaps as empty and useless as almost any other, is that familiar saying, “Come to Christ.” Not that there is not a great mystery, a transcendent truth, wrapped up in it; but it is a truth which very seldom shines out. It has almost become language of cant. There are those who listen in a perplexed way, and say, “Yes, I suppose I ought to come to Christ; but what do you mean by *coming to Christ*? I cannot go anywhere. I cannot see anybody. What can I do?” They are puzzled; and not the less because they are told to *lay down the*

weapons of their rebellion. They have no weapons that they know anything about; and they do not know how to lay any weapons down. Figures, metaphors, and illustrations, which were very powerful when they were new, by being used as if they were normal, literal, and didactic truths, have come to perplex and puzzle men. Instead of helping, they hinder them.

I propose, if I can, this evening, to lay before you some idea of what I mean, and what I understand the Scriptures to mean, by the beginning of a Christian life; what the aim of it is, and what are its methods; and to do it in such a way as to make it practicable for all who desire and choose to live Christianly.

I remark, then, that while the Master sometimes, and after him the disciples often, preached the doctrine of repentance or conversion (these were substantially the same), they taught that it was only the outlying preparation for that which was to be the real thing. The annunciation of the truth came in this manner: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Every man becomes a Christian for himself; and the preparation consists in conversion or repentance. To stop all known courses of evil is repentance. To cease what you know to be wrong is conversion. It is the preparation for that which is the essential thing. Whatever the wrong or evil may be—repent, turn away from it, that you may prepare yourself for the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is coming to Christ, then? What is the acceptance of Christ? It is not possible for us to come to Christ as they did who could see him in the bodily form. We can come to him by our thought, imagining him; and by and by the image which we get will, in a persistent Christian life, round itself out into great experience and great power; but in the beginnings of coming to Christ, all that any one can do is to undertake to have in himself the spirit, the controlling disposition of Christ. What those dispositions are which the Saviour expects us to have, is not left for one single moment in doubt. If you will turn to the twenty-second chapter of Matthew, and read the twenty-fifth verse, and on, you will see what they are:

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

A disposition of love to God and of love to man, a disposition of filial love and of benevolent love—that is what is required. The declaration of Christ is what? That all the outworkings of Scripture—its services, its symbols, its ordinances, its commands, the

things which it forbids and the things to which it exhorts—spring out of this vivific center of love to God and love to man. It is very simple.

You will find that the apostle taught the same thing in the thirteenth chapter of Romans. Speaking of practical duties, he says :

“Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Here is precisely the disposition at which men are to aim; namely, a state of mind in which their feelings toward God are feelings of filial love and of trust, and in which their feelings toward men are generically and specifically emotions of benevolence, of well-wishing, and of kindness.

Now, let me take this as a standard, and apply it to you. Let me, if I can, persuade you, for one moment, to consider what has been the tendency of your life and of your disposition. Have you been accustomed to love—not occasionally, not as a rare flash of experience, but as the outgrowth of a disposition in you, working day and night, and gathering as other dispositions have? Has there been a steady current of your soul toward God, in any sense, of love? Has there been in your experience, continuously, any disposition of benevolence toward your fellow men? I do not ask whether you have been good-natured and kind when you were pleased. I do not ask whether you have had an occasional flush of gladness at the good fortune of others. I am speaking of that which goes to make character. I am speaking of the building up of a man in you. Are the elements with which you have been building these two: love to God, and love to men? I appeal to your conscience.

We come, then, to the very first step. In the application of this aim to Christ, and in this method of accepting Christ and his spirit, we find a foundation for that which is called “conviction of sin.” When Christ preached the Gospel to men, they were profoundly convinced of their sinfulness; and the faithful preaching of the Gospel in every generation since has had the effect of producing in men a sense of personal sinfulness.

Many men say, “We are not depraved; we are not corrupt.” If by that you mean that there is a love of truth in you, I am on your side. There is a love of truth in you. If you mean that there is a certain element of conscience in you, understanding “de-

pravity" to mean that men are absolutely without any points of goodness, then I am with you again. But do you not believe if true holiness consists in love to God, and in the disposition of love toward men, that in both of these respects you are deficient, if not absolutely destitute? Have you had a constraining power of love which ruled in you? Has it been a thought of God, and a filial desire to please him, that has absolutely fashioned and shaped the purposes of your life and all the elements of your character? And, bringing it on to still more familiar ground, do you believe that from the time of your childhood up to this hour the main purpose of your life has been to make men better and happier, and to use all the power that is in you for that purpose?

Men do not believe in depravity. They say, "I do not believe everybody is so sinful as ministers claim." It is not my purpose to discuss, to-night, what your ideas of sinfulness may be. Here is the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Have you ever done it? This is one of the test questions. It is a criterion of character. Have you experienced this love? Has it been more than a transient feeling with you? Has it been a primitive, regulative, abiding tendency, so that it has wrought your disposition in you? Have you had this love to God? If you have not, is not that a law which you understand, which you approve, and which you believe to be a noble thing? If you measure yourself by such a standard as that, you cannot but believe that you are below it.

Take the other question—that of sinfulness. I will not say that any of you have been stained with crime. I will not say that you have been streaked with vice. I will not say that you have broken out into sins which are against the well-being of society, nor that you have been engaged in an active round of mischief; but the foundations are in you out of which all such tendencies spring in other men. There has been an absence in you of a positive and absolute disposition toward men of well-wishing and well-doing. You have never loved your neighbor as yourself. Not only have you never done it, but you do not believe you can do it. You do not believe anybody can do it. You think the doctrine that any one can love his neighbor as himself is a poetic ideal. You regard the thing as utterly impossible.

But look at your disposition. Are your plans of life, is your idea of manhood, is your conception of duty based upon this: "I will cultivate in myself love, that I may diffuse love among men. I will seek to develop moral beauty in myself, that I may instil moral beauty into them, and elevate them. I will build myself up

in strength, that I may help the weak. I will make myself affluent in goodness, that I may succor those who are needy"? Is that the aim with which you are living? Has it entered into your conception that that should be the ideal of human life?

How is it with men—even the men that we call good? It is, every man for himself, mainly; and for his larger self, his family; and for his still larger self, his set or clique. Men look out for themselves first; and then they look out for those around about them who are in affinity with them; and then, if they have any leisure and any means left, they think of mankind, perhaps. Who is there that, in building up himself, has this radical conception: "I am not my own; I am bought with a price; I am to look, not alone on my own things, but also on the things of another. All men are my brethren. He is my brother who is in any trouble or suffering. That spirit should be in me which was in Jesus Christ, who loved the Father, and said, 'It is my meat and drink to do his will,' and showed how to do his will by going about and doing good?" Has benevolence been the end and aim of your life.

Where a man is convicted of sin, oftentimes there is a dramatic experience. There is a sense of God's law. What that law is men do not exactly know. They have a sense that it is a vast power above. They feel that they are enemies of God, and enemies of God's cause; and they are seized with great terrors and pangs. And I bring home to you this conviction of sin—this conviction that you have never lived according to the law of kindness or benevolence toward God and toward men. Such has not been the tendency of your life or disposition in the past, and such is not the tendency of your life or disposition now. If we measure by such a rule as this, there is not one of us who is not obliged to say, "The rule slays me. I cannot abide that test."

When, therefore, you want to know whether you are convicted of sin or not, it very likely may be that certain passages in your past life will come up. If you have been a drunkard, if you have been a sabbath-breaker, if you have been a profane man, if you have been hard and usurious, these things will plague your thoughts; but that is the truest conviction of sin which goes to the center, and says, "My life and character are destitute of godliness and of benevolence. I am wrongly built from the very center outward. I lack and need that which God has declared to be the whole law. It is the commandment on which God himself stands; for he demands nothing of us that he does not also demand of himself. While he commands us to love, he loves supremely.

So, then, conviction of sin is a thing very plain to be under-

stood. It is the conviction of a man that he is not a lover of God, that he is proud, that he is self-seeking, that he is hard, and that he is indifferent, negligent, or even oppugnant to the welfare of men.

To-morrow, when you go into the street, and meet people, test yourself a little. See what your feeling is toward them as you meet them man by man; as you see them crowding the boat or the car. Ask yourself, "How much have I of that large feeling of benevolence which makes men yearn toward their fellow men? What is there in me which makes my heart go out in desire after those around about me? Look at little children—those that are ragged and dirty; those that need the most pity and help; those that are the least lovely. Look at men who have faults, among all classes and dispositions. See if there is in your soul a breathing of benevolence toward all who exist near you. Consciousness of defect in this regard is what I call the best conviction of sin. I like convictions of sin which are specific, which go down to the practical life of men, and which are experienced, not in occasional moments or hours, but during every hour and every moment.

What, then, is conversion? A great many suppose it consists in a purpose to serve God. Yes, but what is serving God? It is becoming like the Lord Jesus Christ. It is being transformed into the spirit of true love to God and true love to man. He is not converted that felt very bad yesterday and feels very good to-day. A man is not converted merely because he can say, "I once did not care anything about church, and did not like the Bible, and did not love to pray; but now I like to read the Bible, and go to church, and pray." All that may be true of an unconverted person as well as of a converted person.

When you come to the center of it, what is conversion? A man has been living a proud, selfish, self-aggrandizing life, and has been indifferent to other men; but he takes a new view, and says, "My God is living for others. Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for many. I am called to that life which he lived. And, by the grace of God, and the Spirit's help, I will be transformed, and will see that all the ends of my life, from this day forth, are benevolent."

If a man is changed so that he says, "I have, by God's help sworn the irrevocable oath; I have consecrated myself to the work of benevolence," he is converted. By conversion, however, I do not mean perfection, but enlistment.

Now we come to inquire what is meant by "the conflict of Christian life." It means that struggle which takes place when the

attempt is made to bring every part of our nature into subjection to this new principle of life, and to compel our whole mind to receive the perfume of love, and to breathe the spirit of love toward our fellow men. There continues to be in us, after we are converted, an indifference to men. But there must not be indifference to men. Indifference to men is treason. There is the old feeling of pride which leads us to take care of ourselves and demand attention from others. That feeling must bow down to love, and be softened and sweetened, as it was in the apostle Paul. There is in us the same desire for praise—the same tendency to vanity. That must be baptized in love. All our seekings and yearnings and aspirations must be in this new channel.

If you are very happy in singing and praying, that is good, if your happiness is accompanied by a change which makes you really more benevolent, more gentle, more kind, more sympathetic, more loving, more lovable. A man who is converted, and is not more lovable, is not thoroughly converted. If after a man is converted, he is not so agreeable or companionable; if he has only strained himself up so that he does not touch men; if he is less sympathetic and warm, then he is mistaken about his being converted; or, it is a bad kind of conversion that he has undergone. He that is converted has gone out of winter into summer. He that is converted is full of generous sympathy. That is the reason why a Christian man is always social. The moment men enter the Christian life, they become social. You cannot, in this world, fill up a religious life without the social principle. Christianity is social in its very central element.

If, therefore, men wish to know whether they are converted or not, there is the test. They know as well as anybody else. If they are in any doubt, let them ask those that are around about them.

A man has a brier growing in his flower-pot; and not being satisfied with it, he says, "I will have this grafted." So he grafts it with the Marshal Neil rose. It takes, and he waits to see how it will develop. By and by the buds begin to appear and open, and the whole bush begins to glow; and the man says, "I wish I knew whether this was really a grafted rose. I wish some one would tell me whether it smells good or not." I think if it were the Marshal Neil rose you would know it by its fragrance!

You have had that which was worse than a brier in your disposition; and if you are grafted with the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that spirit is beginning to be developed in you, you will not have to ask many persons, "Am I blossomed, and am I sweet and fragrant, in gracious dispositions?"

A man is proud and hard and obstinate, and wishes he knew whether he is converted or not. Everybody else knows whether you are or not. If your old granite disposition is as hard as ever, and if when people fall against it they are ground to powder, then you are not converted. "By their fruits shall ye know them."

Here is a man of the intensest avarice. All roads go to his pocket, and none lead away from it. He loves money, and lives for it, and will sacrifice all other interests for it; and he wants to know whether he is converted or not. He sits down and studies his evidences of conversion, and concludes, on the whole, that he is converted. He really takes a little more interest in Sunday than he used to. He enjoyed the music very much last Sunday, and he never noticed it before. He had not been accustomed to go to church, and being known to be a rich man he received a great deal of attention, and he was put into a good pew, and a gentleman spoke to him in flattering terms after the service; and he felt quite happy, and went home and said, "Who knows but I am converted? Can a man be converted and not know it? Can he slip into it unawares when he is asleep? I wish I knew whether I was converted or not." The man who makes a bargain with you to-morrow will know whether you are converted or not. When a man is converted he is converted into benevolence. No man was ever converted into stinginess. If you remain hard, and selfish, and proud, and vain; if there is no battle set up against your lower passions; if there is no evidence of the beginnings of a better life in you, then you need not be in any doubt as to whether you are converted or not. I do not care if you have a band of angels singing to you day and night, they are singing to a fool! He that is called to the Lord Jesus Christ is called on this charter: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." No rapture, no vision-seeing, nothing that does not produce a sense of real sympathy for your fellow-men, and make you feel that their interests are as dear to you as your own, should be taken as evidence that you are converted. If you have not love, you have nothing.

Read the first few verses of the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians, and see what the apostle says. Even if you give your money for benevolent purposes; even if you become so zealous in building up some great and good cause that you would stand and burn at the stake in its behalf, if you have not love, you are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. The center is left out if love is left out. If a man is convicted, he is convicted that he is a selfish being, and void of love to God and men. And if a man is converted, the evidence of it is in this: that he is brought into a new disposition to-

ward God and men—a disposition which requires no metaphysics to explain, and which is within the comprehension of a small child. “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Men can test their own evidences.

In what direction should you look to see whether, on the whole, you are increasing in the Christian life? There will be many collateral evidences. A man, by studying God’s word, may find that he gives the truth greater breadth; and by the practice of devotional service he may find that he worships easier and to more purpose. The evidence of growth is evidence of the amelioration of the faculties. A growing Christian, for instance, is one who is becoming more kind and just toward his fellow-men.

I think that men’s thoughts are, for the most part, largely like sharks’ mouths and teeth. There is nothing about which, as I grow older, I seem to feel, I think, more like Christ, than about the injustice of men toward men in their thoughts—in their contemptuous feelings toward men. Oh, how men love to find fault! How they love to pick at imperfections! How they love to hunt evil things! How they carry suspicions in their minds! How hastily they judge! How he seems bad that is not helping them nor giving them pleasure, but is hindering them and giving them pain! How they set up a tribunal before which their neighbors are perpetually tried and condemned! How often do they disregard the injunction of God, “Judge not that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again!”

These harsh thoughts of men; this carelessness of them; this want of respect to their need and their welfare; this prying out of their faults; these conversations of men about men and of women about women; this dolorous cannibalism of the table; these perpetual insights into human nature with a kind of rejoicing in iniquity—all these things mark a want of summer; a want of Christ-likeness; a want of that spirit which led the Saviour to suffer for men, rather than that men should suffer in consequence of their sins and transgressions.

If you are growing in grace, you will find that the presiding chief-justice in your soul is kindness—kindness of thought and kindness of feeling. If you are growing in grace, you will find that the very tones of your voice will change to kindness. You will find that that which was rough and abrupt, and which had a tendency to provoke or annoy men, will give way to that which is smooth and gentle. If the spirit of your life is Christ-like, if you are developing in Christian life, you are growing in tenderness and

in meekness, and you are growing lovely in the sight of men. You are making your way brighter. You are making other people's way brighter. You are making happiness for yourself and others wherever you go. If you are not; if you are unsocial; if you are pugnacious; if you are critical, fault-finding, hard, penurious, stingy, I do not care what your other experiences are, you are not growing in grace. The spirit of Christ is a spirit of love.

Here, then, is the beginning of Christian life. It is the voluntary choice of Christ's example and disposition as that upon which you will form your life and your character. That disposition is love, both upward and outward. The beginnings of it are ceasing from all evil, and commencing to live Christianly in this respect, that you may live benevolently. Your conviction of sin will turn on that point. If your conviction be salutary, your sense of conversion will be the evidence that you really have begun to live on this principle, and that this is the purpose of your life. Your Christian progress will be marked by the progress and the triumphs of a living disposition in you.

In the first place, in closing, I appeal to you whether there is not a reality in Christianity as presented in this way. I ask you whether, if men really did frame their minds and dispositions on this basis, there would be any room for skepticism on the subject of Christianity. We have so intellectualized the great truths of Christianity that men may take either side, as they do, and argue on it. But there is one element of Christian life about which there is absolute unity of belief to-day; and that is where a man subordinates all his interests to benevolence, where he does love God, and where he does love men. Where a man acts in the spirit of benevolence or love, all men agree that he has religion. If a man lives symmetrically and fruitfully, according to the law of God, that is a fact which no skepticism can undermine, and which no skepticism wants to undermine. You may talk about the inspiration of Scripture; you may talk about whether there is or is not a Trinity; you may talk about whether there are three persons or one in the Godhead; you may discourse on the nature of the atonement, and what not; but there is one great question or doctrine which no man debates; and that is, that he who is living a consistent life of benevolence is a religious man. Everybody believes it. If you could have a church gathered in which the whole membership, old and young, really exemplified that principle, there would be no dog to wag his tongue against it; no man to find fault with it. There can be no heresy in love; and there can be no doubt or dispute among men where this large and divine trait exists.

Men say, "What will become of the church? Is it going to stand the tests which are brought to bear upon it by discovery? Are we going to hold our theories against advancing science?" Let science advance. If it can show any better type of character than is to be found in the New Testament I shall hail it. Where can you find any nobler type? Where has science disclosed a higher ideal than that of God manifested in Jesus Christ? Can science take away from me the conviction that the supremest conception of manhood lies in the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself?" If that is the heart of religion, how is progress or change going to take it away? It is not a question of speculation. If that is the noblest and best element in the universe, as it is, it will stand.

If, then, we are to labor for the progress of divine principle in this world, while we are not to be unmindful of doctrines, and the difference of views in regard to those doctrines, every one of us, in his own sphere, can be making the triumph of Christian truth more and more certain. Every man who rounds up his experience into the blossoms and fragrance of Christian life, is laying a stone upon the foundation which is not to be shaken. And every man who is living in a spirit contrary to this, is helping to build up the other kingdom.

To live to sympathize with men and care for them is to be on the side of God. To live to use them, and grind them up, and destroy them, outwardly or inwardly, is to be of the party of the devil. Selfishness is Satan. Satan is selfishness. He that wounds, grieves, makes miserable his fellow men, is on the side of the devil. He that seeks to build men up and help them is of the party of God.

I appeal to every person in this congregation, young or old, is not this life of Christ—that life by which your whole soul is transformed into love to God and men—worthy of your heed and of your strife? Do I call you to anything unreasonable or less than rational when I appeal to you to take sides with the Lord and God? Is it not to take sides with yourself. Self-interest of the higher kind dictates that you should become Christian men.

I do not ask you to join this church, or any church. Take what church you please. Taking one church or another is very much like taking a carriage or a car, according to your preference. Some vehicles run swifter, and some not so swift; some are better and some are worse in the matter of convenience. But that is not the question. The question is, "Will you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as the model of your life? Will you enter into his life, that you

may enter into sympathy with all mankind? Will you take his cross, and crucify your selfishness? Will you rise into newness of life in Christ Jesús?"

That life begun here is perpetual. Love never fails. Knowledge shall perish, prophecy shall cease to speak, all that is beautiful shall stop at the mouth of the grave, wealth and power shall die, all things bright shall grow dim; but love, once begun, and having in it the touch of God's spirit, shall go on waxing brighter and shining stronger, and having more and more of the Divine Spirit in it, till at last you shall be caught up; and as flame mingles with flame your renewed and blessed spirit shall be brought into the brightness of the Divine love.

God grant that you may be born again, out of selfishness into love to God and love to men.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Heavenly Father, that we are permitted to come again into thy presence. Thou hast heard our prayer, and blessed the day. We thank thee for all the joy of the sanctuary. We thank thee for the sanctifying influence of the Spirit upon our homes. We rejoice in all the mercies which are scattered thick in our way. We desire to be rendered more worthy of thy favor. Grant unto us, not alone the thought of thee, and the hope of salvation at death by thy grace and power. Grant us, day by day, such union with thee, such growing likeness to thyself, that we shall taste something of the joy of heaven before we are translated thither. We desire strength from day to day to do the things that are right. We desire to have our thought of that which is right made pure. Raise higher our thought of things that are noble and just and good. May the things which we shall seek be things for which we shall be willing to sacrifice whatever is mean and ignoble and selfish. Grant that we may have an earnest inward longing for righteousness—that hunger, that thirst, which thou hast said shall be filled. May we behold thee in thy gentleness, in thy meekness, in thy lovingness. May it be a Christ possessing these traits in their perfection that we shall seek, and receive, and follow. We pray that we may take thee for our Guide, so that our pride and envy and avarice and passion may be held in subjection. May we submit ourselves to those things which must needs come upon those who would seek to overrule their evil propensities. Grant, we pray thee, that we may have such a presence near us and around us from thee, that we may fitly call ourselves the children of God, not of an outward pattern, but by reason of our inward spirit. May there be a Christian spirit abounding in all our lives.

Are there those in thy presence, far from thee, who have been taught of God and of duty, and have wistfully looked upon the way of religion, and hesitated, and not turned in at the call of God? O Lord! we pray for them. We beseech thee to open their understandings more clearly. Wilt thou incite their hearts more earnestly to a fervent and true life in God.

We pray for those who stand afar off, unconcerned. We beseech of thee that the truth of God may enlighten them. May their thought become nobler and better. May they not propose to themselves the things that perish alone. May their life be hid with thine, and may they seek a nobler disclosure of their life in Jesus Christ.

We pray that thou wilt grant that those who are surrounded by temptations, and are not so much thinking of religion as of how to maintain their morality, may find thee a present help in time of need. Succor the tempted. Strengthen the weak. Bring back the wandering. Make the way into transgression hard. Make the way back again easy. We pray that thou wilt draw around about all those who seek to escape from sin, the sympathy and the generous trust of those who have themselves been rescued and brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Bless those in our midst who are preaching Christ. Bless parents who are teaching their little children. Bless those who are instructing the young in our schools. Bless those everywhere who go forth to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ's love. We beseech of thee that thou wilt fill their own souls with the spirit of the Saviour. And may they rejoice in their work, and not be weary in well doing, knowing that in due time they shall reap if they faint not. Raise up yet more laborers. Behold, how large is the harvest! How few are those who labor therein! We pray that thou wilt cause more and more to consecrate themselves to a life of self-denying industry for others.

Wilt thou bless this city and all its churches, and the great city near to

us and its churches, and all the institutions of benevolence, and all the methods by which men are restrained from evil and incited to good.

Pour out thy Spirit upon our whole land. We pray for revivals of religion, pure and undefiled. We pray for justice, for truth, for conscience, for love. We pray that this whole land may be lifted, by the power of the Spirit of God, to a higher experience than hath befallen any nation thus far. Then may its light shine abroad, and may it guide the wandering peoples that are seeking to go from darkness to light.

Let thy kingdom come everywhere, and thy will be done, in all the earth, as it is in heaven. And may the whole globe be filled with thy glory. We ask it in the name of the Beloved, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*



PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt help us to understand thy counsels. May we realize that thou art not far from us, but near to us, even within us. May we heed thy speaking to us, in our conscience. We pray that we may understand how simple is the life of a Christian, and yet how laborious. May we know how few are the things which thou hast enjoined, and yet that they are yokes and burdens. Grant, we pray thee, that we may take thy burdens and yokes cheerfully. May all that in us which is wild, which is passionate, and which seeks self-satisfaction, be harnessed and controlled, utterly; and may we rise through self-control to liberty. May we learn through loving that therein we have our greatest strength. Give to us aspiration and hope, so that all things shall change in color before our sight: so that those things which seem most barren shall seem fruitful; so that that which seems hard to our feet shall seem easy; so that our example shall become more and more fruitful of good to men.

Accept the services of this evening. Accept our thanks for the blessings of the day. We commit ourselves to thy care, dear Father, for the hours of the secular week. In our business, in our goings to and fro, at all times and everywhere, may we have the convoy of our God. And when we have gone through life here, may we find the gate there, and enter, to go no more out forever. And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be the praise. *Amen.*

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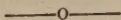
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